

Vocabulary Instruction Routine Template

Word Tier 2/3	
Syllables and Syllabication	
Morphemes (word parts)	<p>Prefixes:</p> <p>Roots:</p> <p>Suffixes</p>
Student Friendly Definition/Example	
Concrete Example (sentence, anecdote, etc.)	
Visual to support the word	
Synonyms and Antonyms	<p>Synonyms:</p> <p>Antonyms:</p>
Families	<p>Prefix Family:</p> <p>Suffix Family:</p>
Examples and Non-Examples	
Visual Organizer	

Name _____

Date _____

Definition	Facts
Word/ Concept	
Examples	Non-examples

Common Greek Roots

Greek Root	Definition	Example
anthropo	man; human; humanity	anthropologist, philanthropy
auto	self	autobiography, automobile
bio	life	biology, biography
chron	time	chronological, chronic
dyna	power	dynamic, dynamite
dys	bad; hard; unlucky	dysfunctional, dyslexic
gram	thing written	epigram, telegram
graph	writing	graphic, phonograph
hetero	different	heteronym, heterogeneous
homo	same	homonym, homogenous
hydr	water	hydration, dehydrate
hyper	over; above; beyond	hyperactive, hyperbole
hypo	below; beneath	hypothermia, hypothetical
logy	study of	biology, psychology
meter/metr	measure	thermometer, perimeter
micro	small	microbe, microscope
mis/miso	hate	misanthrope, misogyny
mono	one	monologue, monotonous
morph	form; shape	morphology, morphing
nym	name	antonym, synonym
phil	love	philanthropist, philosophy
phobia	fear	claustrophobia, phobic
photo/phos	light	photograph, phosphorous
pseudo	false	pseudonym, pseudoscience
psycho	soul; spirit	psychology, psychic
scope	viewing instrument	microscope, telescope
techno	art; science; skill	technique, technological
tele	far off	television, telephone
therm	heat	thermal, thermometer

Common Latin Roots

Latin Root	Definition	Example
ambi	both	ambiguous, ambidextrous
aqua	water	aquarium, aquamarine
aud	to hear	audience, audition
bene	good	benefactor, benevolent
cent	one hundred	century, percent
circum	around	circumference, circumstance
contra/counter	against	contradict, encounter
dict	to say	dictation, dictator
duc/duct	to lead	conduct, induce
fac	to do; to make	factory, manufacture
form	shape	conform, reform
fort	strength	fortitude, fortress
fract	break	fracture, fraction
ject	throw	projection, rejection
jud	judge	judicial, prejudice
mal	bad	malevolent, malefactor
mater	mother	maternal, maternity
mit	to send	transmit, admit
mort	death	mortal, mortician
multi	many	multimedia, multiple
pater	father	paternal, paternity
port	to carry	portable, transportation
rupt	to break	bankrupt, disruption
scrib/script	to write	inscription, prescribe
sect/sec	to cut	bisect, section
sent	to feel; to send	consent, resent
spect	to look	inspection, spectator
struct	to build	destruction, restructure
vid/vis	to see	televise, video
voc	voice; to call	vocalize, advocate

Common Prefixes

Prefix	Definition	Example
anti-	against	anticlimax
de-	opposite	devalue
dis-	not; opposite of	discover
en-, em-	cause to	enact, empower
fore-	before; front of	foreshadow, forearm
In-, im-	in	income, impulse
in-, im-, il-, ir-	not	indirect, immoral, illiterate, irreverent
inter-	between; among	interrupt
mid-	middle	midfield
mis-	wrongly	misspell
non-	not	nonviolent
over-	over; too much	overeat
pre-	before	preview
re-	again	rewrite
semi-	half; partly; not fully	semifinal
sub-	Under	subway
super-	above; beyond	superhuman
trans-	across	transmit
un-	not; opposite of	unusual
under-	under; too little	underestimate



Launching young readers!

Reading Rockets

Six Syllable Types

By: [Louisa Moats](#), [Carol Tolman](#)



Learn the six types of syllables found in English orthography, why it's important to teach syllables, and the sequence in which students learn about both spoken and written syllables.

Related Content

[Syllable Games](#)

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[Phonemic Activities for the Preschool or Elementary Classroom](#)

Six written syllable-spelling conventions are used in English spelling. These were regularized by Noah Webster to justify his 1806 dictionary's division of syllables. The conventions are useful to teach because they help students remember when to double letters in spelling and how to pronounce the vowels in new words. The conventions also help teachers organize decoding and spelling instruction.

Warm-up: Why double?

Read this fascinating tale. As you read, underline words in which there are two or more consonants between the first and second syllables.

Thunker's pet cats, Pete and Kate, enjoyed dining on dinner. They were fated to fatness. The pet Pete, who was cuter than Kate, was a cutter cat with sharp claws and teeth, scary scars, and one jagged ear.

Pete was ripping up ripening apples and biting bitter strips of striped bug bits as he stared into the starry night. The cat Kate was not as scared or scarred. Kate liked licking slimy slops that slopped from a bucket, sitting at a site that sloped and caused the slop to slide. Kate liked sitting at the site where the slops slid.

— Created by Bruce Rosow (Moats & Rosow, 2003)

What do you notice about the vowel sounds that come before the doubled consonants?

Why teach syllables?

Without a strategy for chunking longer words into manageable parts, students may look at a longer word and simply resort to guessing what it is — or altogether skipping it. Familiarity with syllable-spelling conventions helps readers know whether a vowel is long, short, a diphthong, r-controlled, or whether endings have been added. Familiarity with syllable patterns helps students to read longer words accurately and fluently and to solve spelling problems — although knowledge of syllables alone is not sufficient for being a good speller.

Spoken and written syllables are different

Say these word pairs aloud and listen to where the syllable breaks occur:

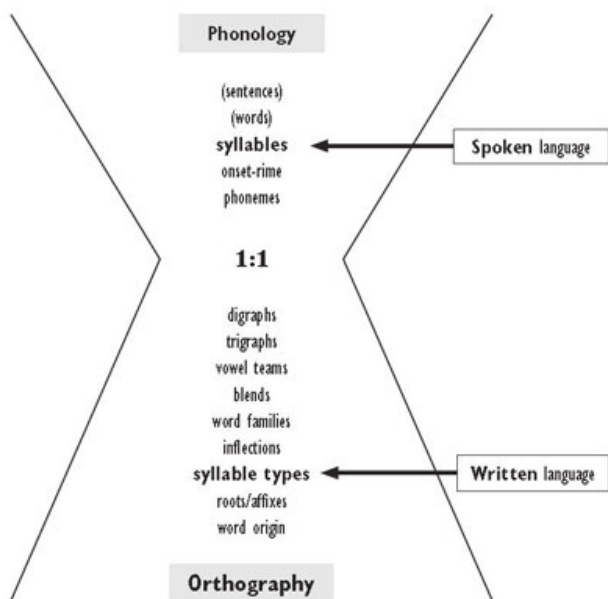
bridle – riddle table – tatter even – ever

Spoken syllables are organized around a vowel sound. Each word above has two syllables. The jaw drops open when a vowel in a syllable is spoken. Syllables can be counted by putting your hand under your chin and feeling the number of times the jaw drops for a vowel sound.

Spoken syllable divisions often do not coincide with or give the rationale for the conventions of *written* syllables. In the first word pair above, you may naturally divide the spoken syllables of **bridle** between **bri** and **dle** and the spoken syllables of **riddle** between **ri** and **ddle**. Nevertheless, the syllable **rid** is "closed" because it has a short vowel; therefore, it must end with consonant. The first syllable **bri** is "open," because the syllable ends with a long vowel sound. The result of the syllable-combining process leaves a double **d** in **riddle** (a closed syllable plus consonant-**le**) but not in **bridle** (open syllable plus consonant-**le**). These spelling conventions are among many that were invented to help readers decide how to pronounce and spell a printed word.

The hourglass illustrates the chronology or sequence in which students learn about both spoken and written syllables. Segmenting and blending spoken syllables is an early phonological awareness skill; reading syllable patterns is a more advanced decoding skill, reliant on student mastery of phoneme awareness and phoneme-phoneme correspondences.

Figure 5.1. Hourglass Depiction of the Relationship Between Awareness in Oral Language and Written Syllable Decoding (Contributed by Carol Tolman, and used with permission.)



[Click to see full image](#)

Closed syllables

The closed syllable is the most common spelling unit in English; it accounts for just under 50 percent of the syllables in running text. When the vowel of a syllable is short, the syllable will be closed off by one or more consonants. Therefore, if a closed syllable is connected to another syllable that begins with a consonant, two consonant letters will come between the syllables (**com-mon, but-ter**).

Two or more consonant letters often follow short vowels in closed syllables (**dodge, stretch, back, stuff, doll, mess, jazz**). This is a spelling convention; the extra letters do not represent extra sounds. Each of these example words has only one consonant phoneme at the end of the word. The letters give the short vowel extra protection against the unwanted influence of vowel suffixes (**backing; stuffed; messy**).

Vowel-Consonant-e (VCe) syllables

Also known as "magic e" syllable patterns, VCe syllables contain long vowels spelled with a single letter, followed by a single consonant, and a silent **e**. Examples of VCe syllables are found in **wake, whale, while, yoke, yore, rude, and hare**. Every long vowel can be spelled with a VCe pattern, although spelling "long e" with VCe is unusual.

Open syllables

If a syllable is open, it will end with a long vowel sound spelled with one vowel letter; there will be no consonant to close it and protect the vowel (**to-tal, ri-val, bi-ble, mo-tor**). Therefore, when syllables are combined, there will be no doubled consonant between an open syllable and one that follows.

A few single-syllable words in English are also open syllables. They include **me, she, he** and **no, so, go**. In Romance languages — especially Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian — open syllables predominate.

Vowel team syllables

A vowel team may be two, three, or four letters; thus, the term vowel digraph is not used. A vowel team can represent a long, short, or diphthong vowel sound. Vowel teams occur most often in old Anglo-Saxon words whose pronunciations have changed over hundreds of years. They must be learned gradually through word sorting and systematic practice. Examples of vowel teams are found in *thief*, *boil*, *hay*, *suit*, *boat*, and *straw*.

Sometimes, consonant letters are used in vowel teams. The letter *y* is found in *ey*, *ay*, *oy*, and *uy*, and the letter *w* is found in *ew*, *aw*, and *ow*. It is not accurate to say that "w can be a vowel," because the letter is working as part of a vowel team to represent a single vowel sound. Other vowel teams that use consonant letters are *-augh*, *-ough*, *-igh*, and the silent *-al* spelling for /aw/, as in *walk*.

Vowel-r syllables

We have chosen the term "vowel-r" over "r-controlled" because the sequence of letters in this type of syllable is a vowel followed by **r** (**er**, **ir**, **ur**, **ar**, **or**). Vowel-r syllables are numerous, variable, and difficult for students to master; they require continuous review. The /r/ phoneme is elusive for students whose phonological awareness is underdeveloped. Examples of vowel-r syllables are found in **perform**, **ardor**, **mirror**, **further**, **worth**, and **wart**.

Consonant-le (C-le) syllables

Also known as the *stable final syllable*, C-le combinations are found only at the ends of words. If a C-le syllable is combined with an open syllable — as in **cable**, **bugle**, or **title** — there is no doubled consonant. If one is combined with a closed syllable — as in **dabble**, **topple**, or **little** — a double consonant results.

Not every consonant is found in a C-le syllable. These are the ones that are used in English:

-ble (bubble)	-fle (rifle)	-stle (whistle)	-cle (cycle)
-gle (bugle)	-tle (whittle)	-ckle (trickle)	-kle (tinkle)
-zle (puzzle)	-dle (riddle)	-ple (quadruple)	

Simple and complex syllables

Closed, open, vowel team, vowel-r, and VCe syllables can be either simple or complex. A **complex syllable** is any syllable containing a *consonant cluster* (i.e., a sequence of two or three consonant phonemes) spelled with a *consonant blend* before and/or after the vowel. **Simple syllables** have no consonant clusters.

Simple	Complex
late	<u>pl</u> ate
sack	<u>st</u> ack
rick	<u>sh</u> rink
tee	<u>tr</u> ee
bide	<u>bl</u> ind

Complex syllables are more difficult for students than simple syllables. Introduce complex syllables after students can handle simple syllables.

Table 5.1. Summary of Six Types of Syllables in English Orthography

Syllable Type	Examples	Definition
Closed	dap-ple hos-tel bev-er- age	A syllable with a short vowel, spelled with a single vowel letter ending in one or more consonants.
Vowel-Consonant-e (VCe)	com-pete des-pite	A syllable with a long vowel, spelled with one vowel + one consonant + silent e .
Open	pro-gram ta-ble re-cent	A syllable that ends with a long vowel sound, spelled with a single vowel letter.
Vowel Team (including diphthongs)	aw-ful train-er con-geal spoil-age	Syllables with long or short vowel spellings that use two to four letters to spell the vowel. Diphthongs ou/ow and oi/oy are included in this category.

Vowel- r (r-controlled)	in-jur-i-ous con-sort char-ter	A syllable with er , ir , or , ar , or ur . Vowel pronunciation often changes before /r/.
Consonant- le (C-le)	drib-ble bea-gle lit-tle	An unaccented final syllable that contains a consonant before /l/, followed by a silent e.
Leftovers: Odd and Schwa syllables	dam-age act-ive na-tion	Usually final, unaccented syllables with odd spellings.

Moats, L, & Tolman, C (2009). Excerpted from Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS): Spellography for Teachers: How English Spelling Works (Module 3). Boston: Sopris West.

For more information on Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) visit [Voyager Sopris](#).

Reprints

For any reprint requests, please contact the author or publisher listed.

Related Topics

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"You may have tangible wealth untold. Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be — I had a mother who read to me." — Strickland Gillilan

Common Suffixes

Suffix	Definition	Example
-able, -ible	is; can be	affordable, sensible
-al, -ial	having characteristics of	universal, facial
-ed	past tense verbs; adjectives	the dog walked, the walked dog
-en	made of	golden
-er, -or	one who; person connected with	teacher, professor
-er	more	taller
-est	the most	tallest
-ful	full of	helpful
-ic	having characteristics of	poetic
-ing	verb forms; present participles	sleeping
-ion, -tion, -ation, -ition	act; process	submission, motion, Relation, edition
-ity, -ty	state of	activity, society
-ive, -ative, -itive	adjective form of noun	active, comparative, sensitive
-less	without	hopeless
-ly	how something is	lovely
-ment	state of being; act of	contentment
-ness	state of; condition of	openness
-ous, -eous, -ious	having qualities of	riotous, courageous, gracious
-s, -es	more than one	trains, trenches
-y	characterized by	gloomy